

Approved 6/9/14

**TOWN OF WELLESLEY  
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
May 20, 2014  
7:30 PM, Great Hall, Town Hall**

Attending: Heidi Gross, Chair, Stephen Murphy, Vice Chair, Raina McManus, Joan Gaughan, Lise Olney and Janet Hartke Bowser, NRC Director

Guests: Bob Brown, Julia Wall, Henry Dowd, Haruki Moriguchi, Kevin Hu, Nick Blenko, Kip Wilson, Cliff Canaday, Melissa Wilson, David Murphy, Marc Shectman, Marlene Allen, Andy Wrobel, Molly Manning

7:30 pm      Public Voice

There was no one present for Public Voice.

7:35 pm      Discussion Re: Restoration of Pre-Existing Hunnewell Field Basketball Courts and Lighting

Supporting documents include

- Memorandum: Wellesley Basketball Courts – NRC/WPC Approvals with attached photometrics and specification sheet, sent by rgurney@ryegateinc.com, dated May 15, 2014
- Memorandum: Restoring the Lighting on the Basketball Courts at Hunnewell Field, sent by Andy Wrobel, dated 5/20/2014
- Memorandum: Restoring the Basketball Courts at Hunnewell Field, sent by Andy Wrobel, dated 9/10/2013

H. Gross opened the meeting on the restoration of the pre-existing Hunnewell Field basketball court lighting.

A. Wrobel, representing the Wellesley Recreation Department, presented the proposed restoration lighting plan. He gave an overview of the pre-existing lighting conditions; the courts were installed in 1989 and the lights were from the original design.

M. Allen gave an overview of the decision to convert the court to parking during construction of the new high school.

H. Gross pointed out that Hunnewell Field is under the jurisdiction of the NRC. The agreement to use the courts as temporary parking included restoring the courts to their original condition. Since lights were in existence at the time of conversion, the lights have to be restored as part of the agreement to reconvert the space. Ms. Gaughan asked whether there were complaints about the pre-

existing lights, parking, noise, etc., from the surrounding community. A. Wrobel did not recall any nuisance issues, and J. Hartke Bowser stated that the NRC office had not received any complaints.

As part of the restoration, the surface of the courts will have a sport surface suitable for basketball and will have a surrounding perimeter of permeable pavement for drainage installed around it, thereby improving existing conditions.

A. Wrobel continued his presentation on the proposed lighting. Six lights will be installed around the two courts; there will no pole in between the courts for safety purposes. The proposed light poles will be 25-ft tall instead of the pre-existing 40-ft. tall towers. The proposed plan calls for LED lights instead of floodlights, and eyebrows will shield the lights. The new lights will provide 14- to 15-ft candles of light each. The plan also proposes using the lowest amount of light possible while staying within recreational safety guidelines: 10-ft to 20-ft candles is the lowest amount of light recommended for basketball courts, and the plan proposes staying as close to the low end of the range as possible. The proposed light restoration improves upon the original lighting: more directed light will call for less energy consumption, less impact on the environment and less impact on the neighborhood. The new lights will also include the ability by the Recreation Director or the School Athletic Director to override the timer in inclement weather.

A. Wrobel also pointed out that use of the basketball courts is likely to increase since enrollment in town programs has dramatically increased since 1989, and no other outdoor basketball courts in town have lights.

There was a brief overview of the use of the baseball field and Reidy Field and the benefit of having lights on the fields. Expanded use of the fields has led to growth in summer programs, and feedback from neighbors regarding the directed lights has been positive.

A. Wrobel continued with a description of the light poles. The Reidy Field lights are 60-ft. tall, and the proposed 25-ft. lights will be less invasive.

There was a question on the type of bulbs proposed to be used as well as the temperature color. A warm color bulb was recommended for use in the 4,000 – 5,000 Kelvin range.

The discussion was opened to the audience for comments and questions:

There was a question regarding what specific department requires that the basketball courts be restored. Parks and playgrounds fall under the jurisdiction of the NRC, and the NRC permitted the use of the land for basketball courts in 1989. The School Committee asked the NRC in 2008 for temporary use of the fields for parking during construction of the new high school. As part of the temporary agreement, the parcel has to be restored to its original condition. The Permanent

Building Committee (PBC) also agreed to the temporary use. The permit was granted for five years.

M. Allen pointed out that restoration could be a condition of the high school special permit. R. McManus confirmed that this was a requirement of the ZBA special permit.

There was a question on the intensity of court use. A. Wrobel replied there is not a definitive plan in place; the Recreation Department would like it to be available for league and nonleague use. No league schedules have been created to date.

M. Manning, representing the Wellesley Youth Basketball Association, commented that having community open space is a benefit to the Town by making programs more accessible. There are 900 kids participating in the basketball program.

S. Murphy asked about season length and expected use. A. Wrobel estimated the season lasting from May 1 to the end of September or October.

There was a comment that the lights would make the courts more accessible to working adults and kids during hot weather.

M. Allen asked about whether school gyms could satisfy demand for courts. A. Wrobel pointed out that schools are closed as of July, a janitor has to be present when gyms are open, facility rental is expensive, and many working adults can only play at night. M. Manning also pointed out that the schools are not air-conditioned. M. Allen asked whether nonresidents would be charged to use the fields; the courts are for Wellesley residents. M. Allen also spoke to the negative impact of the increasing urbanization of Hunnewell Field and the lights on neighboring property values.

A resident at 41 Rice St. spoke to the negative impact of the existing lights and noise on his property.

R. McManus spoke about the impact of the lights on Rice St. and questioned whether the NRC could go forward with the light restoration but not turn the lights on until some of the neighbors' issues are mitigated or resolved.

There was discussion regarding possible solutions to resolve some of the other lighting issues affecting neighbors. There was additional discussion regarding funding of the new lights and whether that funding can be used to improve other lighting. The funding is part of the high school construction project; funding from the high school project can only fund restoration.

There was discussion whether the NRC can include a requirement for a manual timer in addition to the programmed timer so lights do not have to be on when the

courts are not in use. The programmed timer will shut off at 9:30 pm. There was further discussion on controls and rules on noise levels such as a PA system and boom boxes.

There was discussion on assessing existing lights and finding viable solutions for reducing the impact of existing lights before installing new lights. There was further discussion on reconfiguring the existing multipurpose and tennis court lights before moving forward with the basketball court lights. That would have to be done through a town hearing and would have to go through a budgeting process.

There was an additional question regarding the lights being on past 9:30 pm and being on when no one is using the courts and whether the ability to turn off the lights could reduce the impact on the neighborhood. J. Gaughan expressed support for investigating solutions but expressed that it should not be a condition of the basketball court lighting. There was also a question about monitoring and reporting issues as well as discussion on current parking restrictions not being enforced. Parking is limited to the WHS lot and there is no on-street parking.

There was a question on bathroom access. A. Wrobel suggested that directions to the Porta Potty and the park bathrooms be included on signage, which will include rules for court use.

**S. Murphy made and J. Gaughan seconded a motion to approve the plan and specifications prepared by Andy Wrobel and Dave Hickey to install six 25-ft poles with LED lights that will provide at least a 10-ft. candle standard over the courts with the special conditions listed below; the NRC voted unanimously to accept the motion.**

Special Conditions

1. A manual timer shall be added to the lights in addition to the hard timers in the box, so that a user in the evening will need to turn on the timer to turn on the lights (a 60 minute timer similar in format to a sauna timer);
2. A sign shall be posted at the courts with the rules for the court. Details on the contents of the sign will be added later;
3. Recreation will limit the "league use" of the courts to allow for general use by residents. A specific guideline was not decided, but no more than 3 days of league play during the week and perhaps at most one weekend day was discussed as an example;
4. At the end of the seasons (basketball and ice skating), a "debrief" meeting will be conducted between the NRC, Recreation and the neighbors to make sure the rules were adhered to and to provide a forum should there be any unanticipated issues;
5. The court lights will have the same scheduled off time (currently 9:30 PM) as all other lights at the Hunnewell Athletic Field;
6. Parking will be limited to the WHS parking lot. On street parking is prohibited and should be strictly enforced by the police and violators ticketed;

7. Loud music, boom boxes or a PA system will not allowed;

8. Users of the courts will be directed to use either the bathrooms in the center of the park or the porta potty in the stadium

9:20            Director's Report

*Encroachment Correction and Wetland Restoration Plan for 64 Shore Road –*

Glenn Bigonet, the Property Owner, and David Himmelberger, representing the Property Owner, were present.

There is an encroachment on NRC land, including a fence. The Property Owner is proposing to remove the encroaching fence, install permanent bounds, and establish stormwater and wetland protection measures as outlined in his *Restoration Plan* dated April 16, 2014 as prepared by DeRosa Environmental Consulting, Inc. The previous owner agreed to remove the fence but did not. The Property Owner is requesting to use the land for recreational use by maintaining NRC land. The Property Owner is also requesting lower property bounds than the 1-ft. raised bounds. Two bounds will be in the middle of the yard and a third will be in the middle of the driveway. The Property Owner is proposing to establish a 3-ft. Buffer Zone (BZ) with healthy plantings and grass that can be maintained as a wetland. The proposed plantings include red fescue grass, a native grass, which will require minimal maintenance and will significantly improve the area from a wetlands perspective. There was discussion whether allowing the Property Owner to use the land would set a precedent by granting continued ability to maintain a lawn on Town land. There was discussion on the extenuating circumstances attached to the property and the NRC concluded that the use could be seen as an exception and not a precedent. The NRC will stipulate special conditions that no permanent structures are erected on the Town property.

**S. Murphy made and J. Gaughan seconded a motion to accept the restoration plan as presented with a stipulation that no structures are erected on Town land and the property marker height can be set flush in the driveway and six inches in the lawn. The NRC voted 5-0 to accept the motion.**

9:54 pm            New Business/Continuing Business/Liaison Reports

- *Update on Outdoor Lighting and Noise Study Committee* – R. McManus is serving as the NRC representative on the Committee. The Committee is meeting once a month.
- *Update/Discussion Re: Wellesley College's Sale of Open Space* – **J. Gaughan made and R. McManus seconded a motion to appoint H. Gross as a representative and S. Murphy as an alternate on the North 40 Steering Committee; the NRC voted 5-0 to accept.**
- *Caroline Brook Path Tree Issues* – Neighbors are concerned about two trees that have been chopped down to approximately 10 ft. and possible construction of two art installations.

- *Parking Bumpers at State Street Parking Lot* – Bumpers to prevent parked cars from extending into the trail were discussed. There was also discussion regarding permission to remove a fence section to allow adequate room for the trail.
- **S. Murphy made and J. Gaughan seconded a motion to map and place markers on the trail on NRC land at the high school site; the NRC voted 5-0 to approve the motion.**

10:30 pm      Director's Report

- *Perrin Park Playground Improvement Project Draft Design* – **S. Murphy made and J. Gaughan seconded a motion to use a sum of \$2,096 from the NRC gift fund toward the Perrin Park Playground restoration; the NRC voted 5-0 to approve the motion.**
- *Centennial Reservation Access Drive, Parking Lot & Rain Garden Proposal by Department of Public Works (DPW)* – There is a DPW proposal to pave the parking lot and drive as well as to install a rain garden to mitigate for the impervious pavement. The proposal will be presented and reviewed at a future meeting.
- *NPDES Phase II Small MS4 General Permit Annual Report* – a copy was distributed to the Commission for their review.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**S. Murphy made and J. Gaughan seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting; the NRC voted 5-0 to adjourn.**

Respectfully submitted,

Marion Heller  
Administrative Assistant